

Edgecombe
Halifax
Nash
Northampton
Wilson
Counties

UPPER COASTAL PLAIN
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
1309 S. WESLEYAN BLVD.
P.O. DRAWER 2748
ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA 27082-2748
TELEPHONE (252) 446-0411
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Environmental Management Support, Inc.
Attn: Mr. Don West
8601 Georgia Avenue, Suite 500
Silver Spring, MD 20910

October 12, 2007

Dear Mr. West:

The Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments (UCPCOG) respectfully requests consideration of a \$200,000 community-wide Assessment Grant for hazardous substances from the US Environmental Protection Agency. The UCPCOG is a political subdivision of the State of North Carolina, created in 1971 by resolution of its member local governments in Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Northampton, and Wilson counties, as allowed by NC General Statutes. As a Regional council of governments, the UCPCOG proposes to use EPA funding to conduct inventory, assessment, and planning activities for Brownfields sites within its five-county service area. Over the last several years, the Region has experienced a significant decline in and loss of several of its major employers, including textile and fabric finishing mills, animal food manufacturing, crop and animal production, rubber product manufacturing, tobacco manufacturing, and pulp, paper, and paperboard mills. In addition to the loss of over 3,057 jobs since 2000, the area has been left with abandoned and dilapidated buildings. The intent of this grant is to begin the process of redeveloping these areas, which will ultimately lead to new investment and job creation while preserving existing greenfields.

The Brownfields inventory will include a compilation of potential Brownfields sites. Local governments, economic developers, commercial lenders and realtors, and the public will be surveyed to compile the list of potential sites. Once an inventory is completed, the Regional Brownfields Steering Committee and UCPCOG staff will rank the sites to be assessed according to site selection criteria and their potential for redevelopment. Additional criteria which will be used in the ranking are whether the sites are able to comply with EPA threshold requirements and by their potential for reuse in the community.

After ranking the inventoried sites, an RFP will be let to select a consultant to conduct Phase I Assessments in accordance with the All Appropriate Inquiries standards. We envision up to 10 sites being selected for the Phase I Assessment, and ideally these should be spread throughout the five-county UCPCOG Region. Depending on the potential development readiness of the Phase I assessed sites and their involvement in the NC Brownfields Program, we foresee possibly 2-4 of these sites would undergo a Phase II Assessment, depending on owner and other contributions.

Finally, the Regional Brownfields Steering Committee, the UCPCOG staff, and the developers/owners will evaluate the assessments to determine appropriate future uses, consider appropriate remediation options, and estimate the costs for redeveloping the sites. In addition, the "cleanup plan" will include a method for financing the remaining work to be done at the sites.

It is important to note that we have planned an extensive citizen education and participation process as an essential element throughout the project. We have begun to inform the community at-large, including key stakeholders, of our plans to implement a Brownfields program in the Region and will continue these outreach and information-sharing activities prior to the March 2008 announcement of awards. We will begin assembling names of interested persons to serve on our various committees and materials to be used for outreach purposes. If we receive an Assessment Grant, we will immediately begin to implement our ongoing community involvement efforts, making certain to include all citizens in the process.

The UCPCOG has been actively involved in applying for, receiving, and administering Federal and State grants since 1971, and so the expertise is in place to carry out the proposed project. If you need any additional information pertaining to this application, please contact Dennis Patton, Director of Planning and Development Services, at 252-446-0411, ext. 226 or dpatton@ucpcog.org.

Sincerely,



Greg T. Godard
Executive Director

Cc: Michael Norman, Region 4 Brownfields Coordinator

1. **Applicant Identification:** Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments (UCPCOG)
1309 S. Wesleyan Blvd
PO Drawer 2748
Rocky Mount, NC 27802
2. **Funding Requested:**
 - a. **Grant type:** Assessment
 - b. **Amount:** \$200,000
 - c. **Contamination:** Hazardous Substances
 - d. **For assessment grants only:** Community-wide
3. **Location:** the five counties comprising the Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments Region:
Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Northampton, and Wilson

Edgecombe County

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4. Contacts:

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Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments
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5. **Date submitted:** October 12, 2007

6. **Project period:** three years

7. a. Population*:	Edgecombe	52,644
	Halifax	55,606
	Nash	92,220
	Northampton	21,524
	Wilson	77,468

*source: North Carolina State Data Center, July 2006 Estimated

b. UCPCOG is not a municipal government. The total population addressed by this five-county Region is 299,462.

8. **Other:** UCPCOG is designated by the Federal Economic Development Administration as the official Economic Development District organization within the five-county Region. UCPCOG is not a Federally recognized tribe; Federally designated Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community; Federally designated Renewal Community; or a community with an OR from the Department of Justice for its Weed and Seed strategy.

9. Cooperative Partners:

Rick Bain, Director of Building Reuse and Restoration Grants, NC Rural Economic Development Center, 919-250-4314

Ron Baker, Executive Director, Halifax County Business Horizons, 252-536-2322

Kathy Bethune, Secretary, Wilson Downtown Properties, Inc., 252-399-2395

Janet Cavalier, Rocky Mount Area Association of Realtors, 252-937-7181

Roberta Cashwell, President, Tarboro/Edgecombe Chamber of Commerce, 252-823-7241

Eric Evans, Economic and Community Development Planner, Edgecombe County, 252-641-5775

Bruce Nicholson, NCDENR, NC Brownfields Program Manager, 919-508-8418

Allen Purser, President/CEO, Roanoke Valley Chamber of Commerce, 252-537-3513

Dr. Margaret Sowerwine, Chair, Medoc Group of the NC Chapter of the Sierra Club, 252-985-1804

Threshold Criteria for Hazardous Substances Assessment Grant

A. Applicant Eligibility

Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments (UCPCOG) is eligible to administer this EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant. UCPCOG is an organization of General Purpose Units of county and municipal governments, established by the North Carolina General Assembly as a Regional Development Organization in 1971. The UCPCOG serves five (5) county (Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Northampton, and Wilson) and 39 municipal member governments. Please see documentation of nonprofit status and applicant eligibility in the Attachments.

B. Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority

Please refer to the attached letter from the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR) Brownfields Program acknowledging the UCPCOG's plans to conduct environmental assessment activities and submit an application for Federal funds.

C. Site Eligibility and Property Ownership Eligibility

UCPCOG is not identifying specific sites for hazardous substances assessments in this application. This is a Community- Wide Assessment Grant application. Based on the Region's needs, we will identify, prioritize, and assess up to 10 sites with this grant following an application, evaluation, and formal adoption process (see Section C. Site Selection Process). This process will allow the to-be-formed Regional Brownfields Steering Committee to prioritize applicants based on a number of project criteria. Utilizing newly-formed partnerships in the Region to identify, prioritize, and assess Brownfields sites, these Federal resources will be allocated efficiently across the Region. Based on the numerous potential Brownfields sites across the Region, we anticipate prioritizing sites that offer the best opportunities and benefits for the community when redeveloped.

Ranking Criteria for Hazardous Substances Assessment Grant

A. Assessment Grant Proposal Budget

General: The UCPCOGs' proposed Regional Brownfields program will include the formation of and participation by a Regional Brownfields Steering Committee which will be comprised of stakeholders representing a variety of organizations/groups from throughout the Region. These will include local officials, community groups, business owners, economic developers, local bankers, commercial real estate developers, planning directors, environmental advocates, engineers, and regulatory and legal experts. All written agreements, contracts, and reports will correlate with program objectives and fulfill necessary EPA requirements. The UCPCOG staff will continue to network with award-winning Brownfields programs across the country to hone and refine the proposed program based on proven input from these experts. UCPCOG staff will participate in necessary Brownfields conferences and trainings. On Tasks 2 and 4 below, we will comply with the procurement procedures contained in 40 CFR 31.36.

Task 1: Identify, characterize, and prioritize for assessment specific hazardous waste contaminated and potentially contaminated properties from each county within the Region.

Task 2: Conduct Phase I and Phase II environmental assessments on up to 10 selected properties and coordinate assessment activities with regulatory requirements of the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR) Brownfields Program.

Task 3: Identify and secure sources of funding for cleanup and redevelopment. The COG will seek to develop additional Regional partnerships to explore and develop funding opportunities.

Task 4: Conduct cleanup planning and design in conjunction with existing redevelopment plans and NCDENR Brownfields Program and assist site owners in executing Brownfields Agreements.

Task 5: Utilize community involvement throughout the process by working with community groups, the Brownfields Steering Committee, and the public. Aggressively solicit audio, video, print, and web (www.ucpcog.org) media coverage.

Program Tasks for Hazardous Substance Sites							
BUDGET CATEGORIES	General	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Personnel (salaries)	12,130	12,130	6,616	5,514	6,175	12,572	55,137
Fringe Benefits (30% of salaries)	3,644	3,644	1,988	1,656	1,855	3,776	16,563
Travel	2,000	700	250	250	250	2,000	5,450
Equipment							0
Supplies	1,150	250	250	250	250	1,250	3,400
Contractual			97,500		17,500		115,000
Other (Misc.)	\$600	\$200	\$200	\$250	\$200	\$3,000	4,450
Total	\$19,524	\$16,924	\$106,804	\$7,920	\$26,230	\$22,598	\$200,000

B. Community Need

1. Detailed description of the target community that the project will benefit

The five-county Upper Coastal Plain (UCP) Region is approximately 50 miles from east to west and 65 miles from north to south, with a total area of approximately 1.7 million acres (see map in Attachments). The five-county UCP's population of approximately 299,459 people is growing at a slower rate than that of the State or Nation. From 1980 to 2000, the Region's population increased at an average rate of 0.6% per year, about half the rate of growth in the US as a whole (1.2% per year). According to 2000 Census, the UCP is home to a significantly higher percentage of African Americans (45%) than the State (21.6%) and the Nation (12%). In Edgecombe, Halifax, and Northampton Counties, as well as the City of Rocky Mount, over half of the population is African American. Hispanics/Latinos comprise the next largest minority group, comprising approximately 3.27% of the population in 2000. In lies an opportunity to perform social and environmental justice.

The UCP Region shares an economically distressed economy with unemployment and poverty rates well above the State rate, a large minority population, and an increasing concentration of older adults. There is a continuing loss of jobs in business and industry due to closings and restructuring. Factors that have negatively impacted the local economy in the past include: NAFTA, plant closings (manufacturing in particular, tobacco reform legislation, and the decline of small farms). The NC Employment Security Commission reports 15,400 jobs have been lost in the district over the last decade and a half. Generally, decline in population, rise in unemployment and poverty rates, and comparatively low median household incomes are some of the indicators of the socio-economic distress within the Region.

All of the counties in the UCPCOG, with the exception of Nash, have been designated as Tier I – most economically distressed counties in the State. Nash County is one of 39 counties designated as Tier 2, and there are only 20 counties across the State with a Tier 3 ranking. This ranking system is another tool used by some agencies to determine eligibility for economic and community development grant administration as well as for industry recruitment purposes.

The Region as a whole lags behind the Nation and the State in terms of per capita income. The per capita income of the UCP Region lagged behind the US by an average of \$5,662 in 2000 and increased to about

\$15,602 in 2005. The gap in the average per capita income of the Region and the State was \$4,382 in 2000 and increased to about \$11,773 in 2005.

Regarding the prevalence of poverty in the Region, three of the five counties are ranked in the top seven of the 100 NC counties for highest percent in poverty (2003). The percentages range from 20% to 22.3%, which is significantly higher than the State average of 13.4%

Average unemployment rates in the earlier period between 1986 and 2000 were 7.6% for the Region, 4.4% for NC, and 5.6% for the US. From 2000 to 2005, the unemployment rates in the UCP Region still headed the State and Nation by about 2 percentage points. Unemployment in the Region peaked at twice the State rate in 1996 (8.8% versus 4.3%). Since 1996, both the Regional unemployment rate and the gap between Regional and State unemployment have decreased, however, from 2000 to 2006 the gap between the Region and the State increased from 1.84% to 2.28%.

Sources include: US Bureau of the Census, NC State Data Center, NC Department of Commerce, Employment Security Commission of NC, NC Rural Data Bank, and ESRI Forecasts for 2005.

2. Benefits of this Grant to the Upper Coastal Plain Region

Environmental and Health Benefits: This grant will identify environmental contamination at up to 10 sites in the Region and result in improved soil, air, and water quality. The UCPCOG will partner with the State's Brownfields Program to ensure assessments and proposed remediation plans will return contaminated lands to proper environmental and human health standards.

This grant will be a catalyst for infill development across the Region. The proposed Brownfields Steering Committee will give special consideration to proposed Brownfields redevelopment in rural areas and/or small towns to help the Region efficiently utilize its land resources. These projects also help improve air quality by reducing urban sprawl and dependence on automobile travel. Air quality is a critical Regional issue, with declining air quality being a public health issue. With the potential for spillover from the neighboring Research Triangle Park knocking the Region out of compliance with EPA attainment standards, it is critical that vehicle emissions within the Region be kept to the lowest possible levels to not exacerbate the problem. Non-attainment would not only negatively impact human and environmental health but also jeopardize Federal economic development and transportation dollars.

Social/Cultural Benefits: It is anticipated that the Regional Brownfields Steering Committee's Site Selection Criteria will place a priority on projects that invest in a cultural or historical community asset. The Regional Brownfields program will help revitalize historic properties and neighborhoods that preserve and enhance our Region's "sense of place."

An Outreach and Marketing Workgroup, along with staff, will deliver public education on Brownfields issues and activities to citizens in Region L, utilizing quality materials which have already been developed by EPA and other award winners, as well as those which will be created by the staff and the Steering Committee. By increasing the public's awareness about Brownfields and related issues, the Workgroup will enhance the Region's sense of stewardship and promote protection of its natural and cultural assets.

Economic Benefits: The proposed Brownfields program will prioritize properties that are a part of larger development and community plans to catalyze the redevelopment of blighted areas. We anticipate that the seed money from this EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant could channel other resources to adjacent properties, creating a chain reaction of redevelopment. We are aware that several of the potential Brownfields sites within the Region are located within communities' downtowns. If these sites are selected to be part of

this program, the towns and communities could benefit by turning an underutilized and contaminated property into a community asset that could yield a much higher ad valorem tax value as well as jobs created by new businesses.

Redevelopment of underutilized properties could be a key strategy to attract and maintain higher paying jobs. This Region desperately needs higher paying jobs in order to help raise our Region from its current economically distressed classification. (Four of the five counties have been designated as Tier 1 – see B.1. above.) This EPA grant will serve as seed money to leverage millions of dollars in private sector investment, bringing new businesses and jobs to the Region. This offers one of the most cost-effective options for Region L's economic development.

3. Impact and Extent of Brownfields on our Region (Economic, Health, and/or Environmental)

There are four major indicators that give us an idea of the extent of the potential Brownfield's problem in our Region. One indicator is the number of Inactive Hazardous Sites that have been identified by the NC Division of Waste Management's Superfund Section (SFS). Within the UCP Region, the SFS has identified 35 Inactive Hazardous Sites.

A second indicator is the number of facilities with underground storage tanks. According to the NC Division of Waste Management, there are 469 identified facilities with underground storage tanks (USTs) in the Upper Coastal Plain Region. (On average, each facility has 3.3 underground tanks.) Therefore, a reasonable estimate of the total number of USTs in our Region is 1,550. Most likely, hundreds of these USTs have leaks and many are contaminated with other hazardous substances.

A third indicator is the number of facilities that we were able to identify using EPA's EnviroMapper for EnviroFacts website. Due to fact that the emphasis of the Assessment Grant is on potential soil and/or groundwater contamination, we limited our search using the EnviroMapper tool to the following three regulated sites: Superfund, Toxic Releases, and Hazardous Waste. Within our Region, we found nine Superfund sites and numerous sites of toxic releases and hazardous waste. These sites were spread throughout the Region, with the greatest concentrations within our municipalities. We also were able to identify at least three impaired water bodies and eleven impaired streams within our Region.

A fourth indicator is the number of businesses in our Region that have announced their closing over the last twenty years. Based on data obtained from the NC Employment Security Commission, there have been 172 reported business closings in our Region during this time period. It is likely that there were many more business closing during the 20 year period, but we estimate that the 172 closings would include most of the major industrial, manufacturing, and other businesses that are likely to handle some form of hazardous waste. An initial review of these business facilities showed that there are a number of potential Brownfield sites included, based on the type of business and/or product that was being processed/manufactured at the site. Regarding the location of potential Brownfield sites in our Region, for all of the indicators previously mentioned, potential sites are located within each of our five counties.

The negative environmental impacts on the region from not developing Brownfields sites, and consuming undeveloped land, are many. Many properties remain abandoned or underutilized due to real or perceived contamination and the availability of relatively cheap farmland and forested land on the edges of the urban areas. Based on statistics obtained at USDA's website, of NC's 9,079,001 farm acres, 783,655 (8.6%) are located on farms in the UCP. Edgecombe County has over half of their land in farms, with Wilson and Nash also following closely. Between 1987 and 2002, every one of the five counties in our Region lost farmland to development. The resulting loss of farmland, forests, and other open spaces negatively impacts the region in the following three ways -- its ability to provide for its own food needs, the integrity of its ecosystem, and its

ability to provide ecosystem dependent services such as a clean water supply, aesthetics, outdoor recreation and tourism potential.

C. Site Selection Process

1. This is a Community-Wide Assessment Grant application. Up to 10 hazardous substance sites will be selected to receive funding assistance from this Assessment Grant, through an established and EPA-approved application, workgroup review, and Steering Committee approval process. The actual number of sites selected will be determined by evaluating the financial needs of the highest priority sites.

The site selection process will be an integral part of the Regional Brownfields program's organizational structure. This structure will be established early in the funding cycle if UCPCOG is awarded an Assessment Grant. The initial draft Site Selection Criteria (below) were developed by UCPCOG Planning staff by researching EPA documentation, consulting with NCDENR staff, analyzing successful Brownfields programs in other areas, and then applying this knowledge to our Region and its needs. Our criteria were developed and prioritized to maximize the potential for successful projects, realizing that each redevelopment project will catalyze more cleanup and redevelopment projects. These draft criteria will be further refined once the Regional Brownfields Steering Committee is formed early in the funding cycle.

Sites are selected on a competitive basis based on site selection criteria (below). Sites receive higher priority if a redevelopment plan exists or is underway and the owner/developer is eager to redevelop the site. There is an interest in helping sites that are key small town or neighborhood revitalization efforts.

The threshold criteria that must be met for a site to be considered are:

- * Site meets EPA qualifications as a Brownfields;
 - * Site owner is willing and able; and
 - * End use is identified and consistent with adopted plans and/or land use regulations.
- Sites that pass the threshold criteria are competitively compared using the following ranking criteria.

These criteria are listed in priority order:

- * Developer is willing and able;
- * Redevelopment plan appears to be feasible (e.g., developer has financial capacity and ability, funding sources identified);
- * Nature and amount of economic impact (jobs created, tax base increase, quality of life, etc.);
- * Decreases negative impacts on public health;
- * Site redevelopment is part of a larger redevelopment plan;
- * Location within city/town, county and Region;
- * Maintain or restore historical and/or architectural value;
- * Infrastructure available that matches end use;
- * Positive environmental impact of redevelopment (green space, green building, clean-up, etc.);
- * Some environmental assessment (historical data) has been done;
- * Mitigates environmental justice issues/impacts;
- * Site has insurance.

Property owners interested in receiving financial assistance from the UCPCOG's Brownfields program must complete a Site Identification Form (to be developed), and provide the Site Selection Workgroup (another proposed subcommittee of the larger Steering Committee) with detailed information about the site's history and needs. The Site Selection Workgroup evaluates and prioritizes sites based on the Site Selection Criteria, and holds follow-up interviews to gain a better understanding of an owner/developer's sense of urgency and commitment to the success of the project. The staff will provide site information to NCDENR staff and EPA staff for their review and to ensure the sites are eligible for EPA funding and for the State program assistance. The Site Selection Workgroup then recommends specific sites to the full Brownfields Steering Committee for

review and adoption into the program. Applicants who are not approved for financial assistance may receive technical assistance for needs such as helping to negotiate a Brownfields Agreement with NCDENR or securing other funding resources.

The Outreach and Marketing Workgroup performs numerous Regional public outreach activities including public meetings, press releases, Regional newsletters, and other media. These activities will familiarize the public with the program and Brownfields issues in general, and alert the public to the technical and financial opportunities offered through the program.

A key principle that is expected to be adopted by the Steering Committee is the requirement that no site is selected without a willing developer coming forward. In developing the design of the proposed program, UCPCOG staff rejected the “build it and they will come” model in favor of the developer required model. The latter model avoids wasting EPA Assessment Grant funds waiting for a developer to materialize.

2. A Brownfields Inventory for the five-county Region will be developed as potential site partners make inquiry about and/or apply for assistance from this grant. This inventory will consist of sites whose owners have submitted a Site Identification Form, plus sites that have come to the Regional Brownfields Steering Committee’s awareness through public input. Official applicants using the form will be contacted, and the word-of-mouth inventory is retained on file for possible future investigation.

3. It is anticipated that assessment activities will be conducted on both publicly- and privately-owned sites. In discussions with other Brownfields Assessment Grant recipients, few if any site access issues are anticipated. Since our proposed program will be a voluntary program, property owners should be amenable to granting access on an as-needed basis. The proposed Memorandum of Understanding between the UCPCOG and the property owner will have required access agreement language, and this is sufficient to ensure access.

D. Sustainable Reuse of Brownfields

The ultimate goal of our initiative is that Brownfields will not only be identified, but that identified hazardous substances will be properly managed so that the Phase II sites will be put back into productive use. Someone has recently coined the phrase “sustainable land recycling”, which we feel is an appropriate description of what we aim to achieve through our regional Brownfields program.

Over the past several years the UCPCOG has demonstrated a commitment and expertise in the area of environmental planning. Examples of this effort include the development of numerous plans in the areas of Hazard Mitigation, Solid Waste Management, Comprehensive Planning, Land Use Planning, Pedestrian Planning, Parks and Recreation, and Open Space Planning. In addition, the importance of the Brownfields process is indirectly recognized in the Region’s adopted Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The CEDS references the importance of “building renovation” in its Findings section. The CEDS also contains a number of projects that involve the renovation or restoration of dilapidated buildings or the promotion of water conservation through water re-use projects.

There will also be coordination with other local and regional planning efforts, such as regional ecosystem restoration, public health, economic development, and transportation/transit-related efforts. State and national strategies to promote sustainable communities, improve overall air quality, reduce greenhouse emissions, and foster leadership in sustainable development will also be considered when evaluating and assisting with the proposed reuse of a Brownfield. Regarding specific goals listed in the grant guidelines:

1. The proposed program will have a number of measures in place to ensure a site’s end use leads to environmental improvements through reductions in pollution and resource consumption. The regional

Brownfields Steering Committee will work with partners to seek and adopt sites that are consistent with local land use planning strategies, propose reuse of infrastructure (water/sewer, transportation, communication, etc), encourage the preservation and installation of native plant species in landscaping plans, include water conservation and energy efficiency (green building) guidelines and have access to multiple transportation options. Brownfields Agreements secured with NCDENR will include appropriate land use restrictions and control measures to ensure compliance with environmental improvements.

The Steering Committee will work to discourage the creation of future Brownfields on clean sites through public outreach and targeted educational efforts (see Community Involvement section). Additionally, we will prevent creation of "future Brownfields on Brownfields" by selecting projects with viable and environmentally sound business plans. A project's proposed end use is considered to ensure an environmental hazard is not created. Deed restrictions and other land use controls are included in the Brownfields Agreement negotiated with the NCDENR Brownfield's Program to reduce the possibility of future contamination of a Brownfields site.

Comprehensive measures will be developed and put in place to determine the extent to which a project is committed to achieving recognized green building and/or energy efficiency/water conservation standards and to promote, support, and even enhance those measures. The adopted Brownfields sites should have or plan to incorporate such standards in the redevelopment of the property. Under this grant, this will be a critical effort.

To aid this effort, the Steering Committee will maintain strong partnerships with the local power utility companies, other utilities, and local governments' public works departments. Furthermore, the Steering Committee will give special consideration to a proposed Brownfield redevelopment in an urban area or town center. In this way, the grant would be a catalyst for infill development, reducing dependence on automobile travel; thus helping to stabilize the region's air quality. This grant would also help actualize the NCDOT requirement for new Transportation Plans that "multi-modal" options be included. Pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, access to public transportation and close proximity to open/green spaces for recreation are also important criteria for selection and project redevelopment enhancement.

There will be consideration for stormwater impacts and options for stormwater management when Brownfields are proposed for revitalization in the proposed Brownfields program. Experienced water quality staff is available to assist local governments to comply with state-mandated and EPA Phase 2 stormwater regulations to control stormwater pollution. Our agency has implemented several water quality initiatives including stormwater education and stream assessment projects.

In light of the current water crisis in North Carolina, it is significant that several jurisdictions in our region were among the first in the State to adopt additional water conservation measures (voluntary and mandatory). Prior to the current crisis, a water project was constructed in our region that re-uses water for industrial and irrigation purposes. Looking forward, additional water re-use projects are proposed in our current regional economic development plan (CEDDS).

2. This grant will dramatically promote economic benefits for many communities in the region. We have learned that assessment grants awarded to other regions in North Carolina have led to the adoption of Brownfields sites leveraging hundreds of millions of dollars in expected economic impact. The regional Brownfields Steering Committee will continue to sustain an ongoing partnership of the region's economic developers, planners, lenders, public officials, non-profits, attorneys, local consultants, community members, and others to ensure communities' economic needs are met and the community tax base is expanded. Our region has demonstrated through our CEDDS planning process our commitment expanding our tax base,

encouraging new investment, and creating new jobs. All three of these factors will be encouraged to be included as evaluation criteria for the selection of redevelopment sites.

3. As a fundamental aspect of this program, Brownfield projects adopted into the program promote a vibrant community. Our proposed evaluation criteria prioritize projects that are part of a community development plan with comprehensive visions and are considered critical anchor projects in their communities. Projects like these are given priority due to their ability to realize a community's vision to transform an entire area and people's quality of life. Additionally, our Steering Committee will consider including factors in the proposed Site Selection Criteria to encourage projects that invest in a cultural or historical community asset. The proposed regional Brownfields initiative will seek to assist in the revitalization of historic properties that enhance the community.

Regarding linked recreational and open space areas, our agency has already played a key role in starting the greenspace preservation effort in our region, through the development of a *Regional Open Space Strategy*, which is designed to serve as the foundation for future regional efforts in conservation and for the *One NC Naturally* statewide conservation effort. Promoting connectivity and ultimately establishing a regional green space network were elements that were encouraged.

The Steering Committee will also strive to adopt sites that offer socioeconomic benefits such as affordable housing and cultural enhancement. Both of these areas of emphasis are included and promoted in our adopted CEDS.

E. Creation and/or Preservation of Greenspace/Open Space or Nonprofit Purpose

One of the ways that our agency has already played a key role in starting the greenspace preservation effort in our region, was in the development of a *Regional Open Space Strategy*, which is designed to serve as the foundation for future regional efforts in conservation and for the *One NC Naturally* conservation effort. UCPCOG has also been responsible for writing grants for additional parks and recreational facilities in the region. Taken together, the combined experience of our agency would be very beneficial in developing strategies to link Brownfields redevelopment with open space creation/preservation.

In addition, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), adopted by our Board and local governments, includes a "Quality of Life" Goal, as one of its six major goals. Within the Quality of Life Goal, one of the top priority objectives is "to protect environmental resources and assets such as water and forest areas." The CEDS also contains a list of "Suggested Projects" for the region. Of these projects, five should result in the creation of significant open space/recreational amenities, including a "50-100 acre regional park for primarily passive recreation, quality of life, and water quality" benefits.

Specific ways in which our proposed Brownfields inventory and assessment would be linked to our open space preservation efforts, include the following: When considering a site for adoption into our proposed Brownfields program and to receive a needed portion of this grant, staff will recommend to our Steering Committee that preserving or creating green space be a policy priority in the site selection process. A few potential site selection criteria that are specifically related to creating/preserving green space include: (1) an end use consistent with adopted plans; (2) the economic impact, including enhancing quality of life; and (3) the environmental impacts, specifically considering green/open space creation or preservation.

Based on information obtained from other agencies that have prior experience with Brownfields redevelopment, the use of smart growth practices when redeveloping underutilized sites, will preserve greenspace in the urban fringe and rural areas. Such redevelopment practices applied to adopted Brownfields sites should preserve numerous acres of existing greenspace from development.

In order to assure long-term management, care, and preservation of greenspace associated with Brownfields, all adopted sites will be required to enter the NCDENR Brownfields Program. This Program will work with our program and the prospective developer to create a binding Brownfields Agreement which conveys with the land and utilizes appropriate land-use restrictions and other tools to ensure compliance with redevelopment plans.

F. Pre-Award Community Notification

1. The UCPCOG has already conducted community outreach activities prior to this grant proposal's submission. On June 19, 2007, a presentation was made by Bruce Nicholson, Director of Waste Management, NCDENR, to the UCPCOG Board of Directors (consisting of 58 elected officials and individuals from the private sector from our Region) on the NC Brownfields Program. At that time, the Director of Planning and Development Services announced to the group of decisionmakers that we would be implementing a Brownfields program in the Region. Please see Attachments for letter from the Chairman of UCPCOG Board and letters of support from our three Congressmen.

A list of 140 perspective stakeholders within the Region was created and a memo was mailed to each from our Executive Director indicating our interest in developing a Brownfields program and inviting them to an October 2 Brownfields Community Meeting (see Attachments). These included individuals from the following groups/organizations: small town mayors, county and municipal managers, Chambers of Commerce executives, economic developers, downtown development managers, commercial real estate developers, local bankers, land use attorneys, local government planning directors, and environmental advocates and engineers. The meeting was our first opportunity to discuss the Assessment Grant application and the impact a Brownfields Grant would make in our Region. We announced a second Community Meeting for December 4. We will continue to build on our perspective stakeholders' list in the interim and another memo will be sent inviting everyone to this meeting.

2. Since our efforts at the pre-award stage focused on possible future stakeholders throughout the Region, we determined that a letter to each would be the most effective means of informing them of our proposed program and inviting them to the October 2 meeting. Much research was done to ensure that representatives from each of the groups listed above in each of the five counties were included. Our goal was to be as inclusive as possible at this early stage of the process.

3. In a press release sent to the five newspapers which provide coverage to the five-county Region, we announced the submittal of this grant application to EPA and invited the public to view and comment on the draft proposal available on our website (www.ucpcog.org) and here at UCPCOG. This included the newspaper which targets the African American citizens of the Region. Please see the Attachments for press release and web homepage.

4. Any comments received on our proposal and/or on our plans to implement a Brownfields program will be seriously considered by the UCPCOG Planning staff. Since this program has been designed to benefit the communities within the Region, it is important to openly receive and review all public input. Upon the formation of the Regional Brownfields Steering Committee, minutes for all meetings will be prepared and made available via the UCPCOG website. Broad community outreach and participation will not begin until it is known whether we are a recipient of an Assessment Grant.

G. Ongoing Community Involvement

1. The proposed Upper Coastal Plain Regional Brownfields program will have an extensive strategy to involve the local community and stakeholders in all aspects of Brownfields redevelopment, including cleanup and reuse planning. The Regional Brownfields Steering Committee will consist of economic developers,

environmental planners, local and elected officials, civic groups, environmental attorneys, business groups, and more. This massive direct participation will ensure both widespread ownership and success at all levels of the program. It will also provide us with built-in marketing. We will be prepared to implement our community involvement plan soon after the awards are announced. Please see the responses to F. Pre-Award Community Notification above for a discussion of the community involvement activities that have already occurred.

The affected community will be involved primarily through the efforts of the Outreach and Marketing Workgroup, which will be a subcommittee of the larger Steering Committee. This Workgroup will perform a variety of outreach and involvement tasks throughout Region L and will utilize numerous outreach tools including: a brochure used to familiarize the public with Brownfields issues and the UCPCOG Assessment program; updates to the Regional Brownfields Steering Committee and Peer Group; Brownfields presentations geared to specific audiences; UCPCOG Brownfields program web page on www.ucpcog.org; UCPCOG's Board meetings; county/municipality Board meetings; community group meetings; public meetings for specific Brownfields sites/topics; and Statewide Brownfields networking meetings. Outreach events will be advertised through print, radio, government cable television channels, and web media in the form of press releases or flyers. Flyers will also be distributed at local town halls or county courthouses. These avenues of communication will be highly effective in soliciting community input and accurately reflect the community's cleanup and reuse needs.

Should we receive an EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant, a comprehensive community involvement program would be undertaken. We would borrow some ideas from the successes of past EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant outreach efforts in other Regions as well as developing some of our own. For example, school students could take a field trip to Brownfield sites where environmental consultants could explain testing, and the city/town Mayor could explain community benefits with reporters on hand. We plan to conduct outreach activities that are especially well-suited to good public relations and press coverage like youth-oriented outreach activities with school students, Girl Scouts, and other youth organizations.

The Regional Brownfields program would involve the community stakeholders in site selection and provide extensive public education as a part of our community involvement plan. Based on our discussions with planners who have experience with previous EPA Assessment Grants, we understand that successful community outreach begins with soliciting community input on potential sites that will receive financial and technical assistance from this grant. So, we will involve citizens in communities throughout the Region in this effort. We will consciously outreach to all so that diverse representation is assured resulting in requests for sites being effectively dispersed throughout the Region.

The community involvement goals of the proposed Brownfields program are: (1) educate the public about Brownfields issues, (2) inform them about the kinds of assessment activities to expect at the site, (3) offer the community an opportunity to discuss their concerns, (4) provide a system for community members to provide input, and (5) serve as a point of contact for questions and concerns. Other topics will include general environmental and land use planning issues. Most importantly, we will instill a sense of security among the public and engender support for the Brownfields efforts by relieving fears and concerns regarding environmental contamination.

2. We intend to forge a substantial number of Regional, State, and Federal partnerships that will be essential to addressing Brownfields in our Region [see Supporting Partners (attached) and Part 4 below]. Partnerships with local economic development, environmental, and Regional planning organizations will be facilitated through the Regional Brownfields Steering Committee. Our key partner will be the NCDENR Brownfields Program. This EPA grant would supply the necessary funding to continue this successful partnership in

Brownfields redevelopment. The proposed Brownfields program would ensure appropriate cleanup and redevelopment of Brownfields by expanding networks and community contacts. We will attend local meetings, workshops, conferences, and other community events to discuss the program with community members. Since we will work with the NC Brownfields Program to assist property owners in obtaining a Brownfields Agreement, staff from the State Brownfields Program will be invited to participate in all public input sessions, ensuring that appropriate information dissemination and cleanup measures are taken.

3. We will communicate the progress on our project through numerous measures similar to those discussed above in #1 of this section. The Steering Committee's Outreach and Marketing Workgroup will notify the general public of significant milestones such as on-site assessment activities, securing Brownfields Agreements, groundbreaking, or acquiring new funding. Progress will be communicated through email to all partners. Press releases, special community events, news stories in local radio, television, and print media will also be used for broad dissemination of news related to the project.

Other than the African American population, Latinos are our largest minority population, with 9,960 people (2000 Census), comprising about 3.27% of our Region's total population. We expect that this number has increased significantly since the decennial census. Specialized communication will include the use of translators (accessed through local Literacy Councils) to reach the English-as-Second-Language population that may be affected. We will also work with local faith-based organizations and other advocacy groups, which assist new immigrants from various countries, to help disseminate information on Brownfields issues, sites, and opportunities for public input.

4. The community groups below are supportive of our proposed Regional Brownfields program. Please see additional letters of support, UCP Regional Brownfields Program Supporting Partners, in the Attachments. Although our full list of partners will include local governments, State agencies, local citizen groups, banks, local business groups, and developers, this list includes those community organizations who have already indicated their support of our proposed program.

Community Organizations	Contact	Phone	Description
Halifax County Business Horizons (nonprofit)	Ron Baker	252-536-2322	Works with commercial and industry recruitment and assistance
Wilson Downtown Properties, Inc. (nonprofit)	Kathy Bethune	252-399-2395	Enables redevelopment of properties in greater downtown Wilson
Tarboro/Edgecombe Chamber of Commerce	Roberta Cashwell	252-823-7241	Promotes business and industrial growth in Edgecombe county
Rocky Mount Area Association of Realtors	Janet Cavalier	252-937-7181	Works with commercial/industrial property owners for new development opportunities
Roanoke Valley Chamber of Commerce	Allen Purser	252-537-3513	Promotes business and industrial growth in Halifax and Northampton counties
Medoc Group of the NC chapter of the Sierra Club	Dr. Margaret Sowerwine	252-985-1804	Works to Preserves the environment of Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, and Wilson counties

H. Reduction of Threats to Human Health and the Environment

1. Assessment Grant funds will facilitate the identification and reduction of threats to human health and the environment within the region. Threats associated with exposure to hazardous substances will be reduced by working with local and state health and hazardous waste officials, conducting effective community education, limiting exposure to the sites, and providing funds to assist with environmental assessments (Phase I and II).

One of the goals of our community education and outreach efforts is to inform the public of potential health risks at sites identified as contaminated. We will conduct outreach throughout the entire project and additionally target education and outreach to specific site needs as each site is assessed and monitored. Our outreach activities will result in an informed population that understands the environmental issues and risks associated with contaminated sites, thereby minimizing their exposure to a property's contamination.

Assessment Grant funds are incentives for cleanup that would otherwise not happen. As previously noted in subsection B.3, the NC Division of Waste Management's Superfund Section has identified 35 Inactive Hazardous Sites within the Upper Coastal Plain Region. "Inactive Hazardous Sites' by definition are any areas where a hazardous substance release has come to be located and would include active and inactive facilities and a variety of property types. The term "inactive" refers to the fact that cleanup was inactive." Among the 35 inactive sites in our Region, prevalent uses include chemical and other manufacturing, landfills, and old airports. At least seven of these sites are also active Superfund sites.

Our agency has also preliminarily reviewed a list of business closings (from the NC Employment Security Commission) in our Region over the last 20 years in order to get an additional idea of the types of potential Brownfields sites that may be identified. The most prevalent facility type appears to be former textile and fabric manufacturing sites. Because this is the first community wide Brownfields assessment grant proposal for our Region, we believe that it would be premature to speculate on the specific contaminants that may be identified through the actual assessment process. But the number and types of potential Brownfield sites in our Region that we have preliminarily identified (indicated in the previous paragraph) pose a significant potential risk to the environment and public health, therefore it is critical that assessment grant funds be provided, so that these risks may be positively identified. In addition to identification of risks, the proposed regional Brownfields program will be critical in assisting adopted sites to obtain additional funding (private and/or public) for cleanup/mitigation and redevelopment. With the COG's ability to leverage funding, substantial investment to remediate contamination can be expected, which will result in an improvement to our region's environment and a decrease in public health risks.

If assessment activities conducted with these grant funds demonstrate the need to monitor public health threats, we will advise and/or assist local governments and environmental organizations in monitoring community health in areas affected by contaminated sites, but we do not anticipate needing these grant funds for those activities. We will develop a working relationship with local health officials and environmental consultants conducting assessments and will assist with public outreach activities throughout the monitoring process.

2. UCPCOG has established a relationship with the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR) to ensure the redevelopment process protects public health (see NCDENR Letter of Acknowledgement). We will invite a NCDENR Brownfields Program employee to serve on the regional Brownfields Steering Committee. This employee would also serve as the point of contact for the review of Phase II Environmental Assessment reports by the NCDENR Brownfields Program and the submission of any comments to our agency.

Our proposed Brownfields program will encourage owners of contaminated sites to participate in later cleanup activities, through the State's voluntary cleanup program, which would seek to result in their own financial or in-kind contributions. We will also consider the benefits and feasibility of requiring any consultants who participate in our assessment or cleanup efforts to be registered under the NC Registered Environmental Consultant (REC) program. According to the NC Inactive Hazardous Sites Branch, "in order for a firm to qualify as an REC, it must demonstrate it meets certain regulatory qualifications criteria." We also strongly feel that achieving reductions in the threats to human health and the environment need to be promoted through our site selection criteria. The NC Inactive Hazardous Sites Branch has developed a checklist which includes questions that address potential public health issues like well contamination. Those sites that have a greater potential for improving public health and environmental quality, will be given a higher priority in our ranking criteria.

Our coordination with the NCDENR Brownfields Program will result in their assistance in working with sites adopted into our regional Brownfields program and negotiate Brownfields Agreements. These agreements between the State and a property owner ensure contamination is remediated to meet environmental and public health standards. UCPCOG will also strengthen existing relationships and develop new relationships with local public health and other hazardous waste officials, who will also be asked to serve on the Brownfields Steering Committee.

The UCPCOG will develop an EPA-approved Quality Assurance Management Plan (QAMP) that will document procedures to ensure public and environmental health is protected. The QAMP will direct consultants to submit Quality Assurance Project Plans and Environmental Health and Safety Plans to EPA and NCDENR prior to beginning any assessment activities. Public and environmental health will be protected through the oversight of these state and federal agencies. UCPCOG will establish a working relationship with the Public Health Departments throughout our region. We will work with them in the development of procedures to address any hazardous substances identified during assessment which would present a clear and imminent danger to the community.

In summary, our agency understands and is thoroughly committed to the critical ultimate goal that Brownfield sites will not only be identified, but that in order to reduce the significant threats to the environment and public health from hazardous substances, that as many of these sites as possible would be cleaned up in a manner that would meet all EPA and other federal/state requirements. The programs and tools that we have indicated above will insure that this goal is met.

I. Leveraging of Additional Resources

1. At the time of the application, no specific sites have been identified for funding assistance under this Community-Wide Assessment Grant application. If awarded, available grant funds will be allocated equally for up to 10 sites adopted into the Upper Coastal Plain (UCP) Regional Brownfields Program (RBP). Assessment funds allocated to a site which are not fully expended may be used for new sites as they are adopted or to help offset additional assessment costs of previously adopted sites.

It is realized that assessment, cleanup, and monitoring costs can run as high as several hundred thousand dollars per site. Sites under consideration for adoption into the proposed program will be evaluated on their ability and likelihood to leverage additional needed resources. Under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the UCP RBP, the site developer, local government, and/or owner will agree that assessment costs incurred in excess of the funds provided by the regional Brownfields program will be their responsibility. This commitment will be further secured in the contractual relationship(s) with chosen firm(s) performing assessment activities.

Additionally, sites will be adopted into the proposed Brownfields program with the goal of obtaining a Brownfields Agreement (BFA) through the state of NC Brownfields Program. Under this program, the developer agrees to underwrite any assessment costs over and above the regional Brownfields program contribution.

2. Substantial additional funds, both real and in-kind, will be dedicated to this project by this and other organizations to fulfill remaining funding gaps. Resources will be committed to this program through the regional Brownfields Steering Committee, the Peer Group, and the five task-focused Workgroups/ Subcommittees. It is anticipated that consultants, commissioners, economic developers, executive directors, bank presidents, planners, and numerous other professionals and executives will donate thousands of combined volunteer hours to the program. In addition, we expect that some of these stakeholders will be in a position to request funding from other sources.

As a Council of Governments, UCP and its proposed regional Brownfields program have no general revenue fund or taxing authority. However, additional resources, both cash and in-kind, will be dedicated to this project by our organization. We will also encourage the local governments to set aside funds for Brownfields assessments (see Attachments for letters of financial support), cleanup, and redevelopment in their respective jurisdictions, and to investigate innovative funding options such as the state's Tax Incremental Financing. The UCPCOG will use its extensive relationship and knowledge of local, regional, state, and federal sources of funds related to the assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment elements, i.e. CDBG-Economic Development funds, NC Rural Economic Development Center Vacant Building & Reuse Program funds, local government, USDA-RD RBOG & RBEG, downtown redevelopment funds, counties' committees of 100 funds, etc. As the EDA designated Economic Development District (lead planning agency), we have leveraged over \$50 million in total public and private investments from a total of \$18 million in EDA grants.

As further a leveraging mechanism, we plan to establish relationships with some large national Brownfields developers as well as large lenders and with state and regional developers. Additionally, it is expected that some assessment firms which have redevelopment subsidiaries or partners will express interest in the redevelopment of the adopted sites.

J. Programmatic Capability

1. UCPCOG has a long history of managing various grants and has the ability to manage this grant. Over the years, we have successfully managed a large number of state and federal leveraged grants, so the staff is highly experienced grant managers. During the past nine years, UCPCOG has raised and managed over \$20 million in grants for the region. These include federal, state, and foundation grants from EDA, USDA-Rural Development, NCDENR, NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund, NC Rural Economic Development Center, NC Department of Transportation, NC Division of Water Quality, NC GoldenLeaf Foundation, and the NC Department of Cultural Resources. UCPCOG regularly administers state and local grant funds for member governments on a contractual basis. In addition to the Planning & Development staff, the COG's Finance Dept. assists with financials and some reporting. Even though the current staff is well experienced in grants, we continuously send staff to pertinent workshops for up-to-date information and to improve efficiency.

The planning and development staff has experience in not only grant management, but also economic and community development, community planning, community relations, group facilitation, education and awareness programs (water quality), and environmental planning. The staff also has database and GIS capabilities.

2. Since 1998, UCPCOG has raised and managed over \$20 million in grants for the region. As the EDA designated Economic Development District planning agency, we have raised and managed nearly \$18 million

(with over \$50 million total investment leveraged) of this amount involved EDA public facilities (for the construction of training facilities and for installation of infrastructure) as well as economic development planning grants. We have also managed USDA-RD (both RBEG and Community Facilities categories) and small cities CDBG funds.

UCPCOG maintains an exemplary record of federal grant management. There have been no adverse audit findings from either an OMB Circular A-133 audit or the US GAO. UCPCOG is not, nor has it previously been, required to comply with special "high risk" terms and conditions under agency regulations implementing OMB Circular A-102. During FY2006-07, ninety-four percent (94%) of UCPCOG revenue was derived from federal grants, either directly or as "pass-through" funding. During this year alone, federal and state grant funds in the amount of \$1,779,350 have been awarded and managed by UCPCOG.

3. NA – The UCPCOG has not previously been a recipient of an EPA Brownfields grant award or cooperative agreement. The UCPCOG has been involved with several other federal assistance programs, i.e. USDA-RD, EDA, and Community Development Block Grant. Within all of these programs, we have complied with their procurement, progress reporting as well as annual reporting requirement, requisition and financial reporting, and a number of other special compliance requirements. With our experience with all the various The key in getting developers, property owners, and engineers to assist with compliance of the grant agreements elements is communication of expectations upfront, early warning system, and follow-through on those requirements and reporting.

4. Although the UCPCOG has not received an EPA assessment grant with a history of EPA project tracking and performance measures, we have experience in providing monthly and quarterly reports, annual performance measures, and compliance reporting with other grants, i.e. EDA, CDBG, and USDA-RD.

Proposed Project Outputs & Outcomes – If awarded the EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant, the staff has reviewed the Assessment Grant programs from not only the best regional agencies in the state, but also several programs across the country. Based on our assessment of those programs, we have begun to plan the outputs of our proposed program in terms of identifying potential sites with a goal of identifying 100 potential sites within the Region to be evaluated through the selection process. From this group, we have planned to perform up to 10 Phase I assessments and it is anticipated that 2 to 4 (depending on leveraged contributions) of these sites will receive Phase II assessments. With regards to the potential outcomes, the staff would prefer to plan these measures with the regional Brownfields Steering Committee. The staff will recommend, based on the inventory of sites and known redevelopment plans, (1) potential property/building/inventory investments, (2) jobs created, both full and part time, and (3) additional funds leveraged, both in-kind and funds from other sources.

Proposed Tracking of Progress – The staff will track the progress of not only the required compliance requirements (to be compiled for reporting), but also the progress of various program activities within the following elements: (1) Community Outreach & Education; (2) Site Identification & Selection; (3) Consultant Selection & Oversight; (4) Additional Funding & Endorsements; and (5) Economic Development & Industrial Sites. These elements will be divided into key activities to be tracked and the measure of success will be identified in quantitative terms where possible and in qualitative terms where appropriate. Both the program and financial progress will be reported to EPA, UCPCOG Board of Directors, regional Brownfields Steering Committee, and other stakeholders. Site and property information will be profiled and tracked using the Brownfields Property Profile Form in order to provide background and geographic information.